

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 STATE 168941
ORIGIN SS-15

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /016 R

66011

DRAFTED BY:NEA:RENEUMANN

APPROVED BY:NEA:RENEUMANN

S/S-O:LRFLEISCHER

-----017218 041333Z /44

R 040513Z JUL 78

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T STATE 168941

STADIS//////////

EXDIS FOR AMBASSADOR LEONARD

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEL AVIV 8243 ACTION SECSTATE
INFO JERUSALEM JUL 3

QUOTE S E C R E T TEL AVIV 8243

STADIS//

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SHUM, IS, XF

SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH WEIZMAN ON MISTREATMENT OF ARAB
PRISONERS

REF: STATE 145827, STATE 155007

1. I HAD A STRAIGHT TALK WITH WEIZMAN JUNE 29 ON ISSUE
OF MISTREATMENT OF ARAB PRISONERS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRI-
TORIES, A DISCUSSION WHICH A MOD STENOGRAPHER CAREFULLY
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 168941

TOOK DOWN VERBATIM. MAKING IT OBVIOUS THAT I WAS READING
FROM A PREPARED PRESENTATION, I TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD HAD
A NUMBER OF REPORTS OF ARAB PRISONERS BEING SERVERLY MISTREATED
DURING INTERROGATIONS IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. ALTHOUGH
WE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH PRACTICES REPRESENTED ISRAELI
GOVERNMENT POLICY, THE REPORTS WERE TOO NUMEROUS AND CONSIS-
TENT TO BE DISMISSED.

2. NOTING THAT THESE REPORTS WERE LIKELY TO BECOME PUBLIC IN THE NEAR FUTURE. I STRESSED THAT ISRAEL'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD WOULD BE SEVERELY BLACKENED UNLESS IT TOOK SERIOUS AND CONCRETE STEPS TO ELIMINATE WHATEVER UNAUTHORIZED MISTREATMENT MIGHT BE OCCURRING. PRO-FORMA DENIALS WOULD SIMPLY NOT SUFFICE.

3. I THEN MOVED TO CENTRAL OBJECTIVE OF THE MEETING. I NOTED THAT INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS ACCESS TO DETAINEES UNDER INTERROGATION HAD BEEN USED BY ISRAEL TO UNDERPIN ITS DEFENSE OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. HOWEVER, ACCORDING TO THE RED CROSS, ICRC REPRESENTATIVES DID NOT GAIN ACCESS TO DETAINEES UNTIL THE 14TH DAY AFTER ARREST, AND MOST OF THE ALLEGED MISTREATMENT OCCURRED WITHIN THE FIRST SEVEN DAYS. IT WAS THUS UNPERSUASIVE FOR THE GOI TO MAINTAIN THAT RED CROSS VISITS TO DETAINEES UNDER THESE CONDITIONS WAS EVIDENCE THAT NO MISTREATMENT OCCURRED.

4. REFERRING TO THE IMPENDING ICRC/GOI NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE REVISION OF THE TERMS OF THE ICRC'S ACCESS TO DETAINEES, I EMPHASIZED THAT THE EARLIER RED CROSS REPRESENTATIVES COULD VISIT DETAINEES, THE BETTER. EARLY ACCESS COULD BE USED TO SUPPORT AND LEND GREATER CREDIBILITY TO ISRAEL'S DEFENSE OF ITS HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD. ALTHOUGH HAL SAUNDERS, ON THE SECRETARY'S INSTRUCTIONS, HAD DISCUSSED THIS SUBJECT
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 168941

WITH BAR-ON IN WASHINGTON, AND I UNDERSTOOD TAMIR WAS LOOKING INTO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE ICRC COULD BE GIVEN EARLIER ACCESS, I TOLD WEIZMAN I WANTED HIM PERSONALLY TO KNOW HOW SERIOUSLY THE U.S. VIEWED THIS MATTER. WE WERE NOT RAISING THE SUBJECT TO CONDEMN OR PASS JUDGEMENT ON ISRAEL, BUT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE SERIOUS DAMAGE TO ISRAEL'S REPUTATION WHICH THESE REPORTS POTENTIALLY POSE AND THE NEED FOR THE GOI TO TAKE VIGOROUS AND CONVINCING ACTION TO COUNTER THEM.

5. WEIZMAN SAT THROUGH MY LENGTHY PRESENTATION IN SILENCE, INTERRUPTING ONLY ONCE TO ASK IF I HAD DISCUSSED MISTREATMENT WITH DAYAN. (I TOLD HIM I HAD, BUT NOT RECENTLY) WHEN I CONCLUDED, HE RESPONDED EARNESTLY AND WITHOUT RANCOR. THIS WAS PARTICULARLY NOTEWORTHY SINCE A BOMB HAD GONE OFF IN A WEST JERUSALEM MARKET ONLY A FEW HOURS BEFORE MY VISIT, KILLING TWO AND INJURING 37 ISRAELIS.

6. UNDERLINING THAT HE WAS TRYING TO BE WATCHFUL ABOUT THIS ISSUE, WEIZMAN ALLEGED THAT HE HAD NOT HAD ONE COMPLAINT MADE TO HIM DIRECTLY RECENTLY ABOUT PRISON MISTREATMENT OF ARABS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE HAD IN THE PAST WEEK SEEN THE MAYORS OF NABLUS, RAMALLAH AND HEBRON AND NONE OF

THEM BROUGHT UP THIS ISSUE. NOR HAD THEY RAISED IT WITH THE MILITARY GOVERNOR. AT THAT POINT HE AGREED WITH THE INTENT OF MY INTERRUPTIVE QUESTION WHICH INDICATED SKEPTICISM THAT ARAB NOTABLES WOULD MAKE SUCH COMPLAINTS DURING WHAT WAS CLEARLY A GOODWILL VISIT TO THE AREA ON WEIZMAN'S PART. EVEN SO, WEIZMAN COULD NOT RID HIMSELF OF THE FACT THAT AS HE SAID, NO ONE HAD CHARGED THAT "A SON, A COUSIN OR A BROTHER HAD BEEN BRUTALIZED IN DETENTION." HE ADITTED THAT IT DID NOT MEAN IT DID NOT HAPPEN, BUT NO ONE HAD COME TO HIM.

7. RESPONDING, I TOLD WEIZMAN THAT AS I UNDERSTOOD IT THERE HAD BEEN NO SHORTAGE OF PRISONER COMPLAINTS WHICH HAD BEEN FORWARDED THROUGH THE RED CROSS TO THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT. THE PROBLEM WAS THAT THE REACTION BY THE GOI ALWAYS SEEMED SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 STATE 168941

TO BE A PRO-FORMA DENIAL. WEIZMAN SAID HE WOULD CHECK AGAIN. HE WRYLTY NOTED THAT HE HAD MANY COMPLAINTS HE COULD MAKE AGAINST THE ICRC, BUT ADMITTED THAT WAS NOT THE ISSUE AT HAND. HE SAID HE DID NOT SUPPORT SUCH BRUTALITY, BUT HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT SOME PRISONER WERE NOT "GETTING THEIR BACKSIDES KNOCKED IN BY SOME SONS OF BITCHES."

8. AT THAT POINT ILAN TEHILA, WEIZMAN'S AIDE, BRIEFLY LEFT THE OFFICE AND RETURNED WITH SEVERAL SHEETS OF PAPER WHICH, WEIZMAN EXPLAINED TO ME, CONTAINED COMPLAINTS BY 18 ARABS ABOUT MISTREATMENT, IN PRISONS. HE SAID HE WAS LOOKING INTO THOSE CHARGES, AND HOPED I COULD SEE THAT IT DID NOT TAKE A VISIT BY ME TO ELICIT CONCERN ON HIS PART. LOOKING AT THE LIST, AND PRESUMABLY THE ACCUSATIONS, WEIZMAN MENTIONED THAT HE COULD NOT SAY CERTAINLY AT THAT MOMENT THAT ALL THE CHARGES WERE GROUNDLESS. HE COULD NOT AFFIRM, "WITHOUT PRECISELY KNOWING" THAT THE ISRAELI RECORD WAS 100 PERCENT PURE. BUT, HE SAID "PRISONER DO COMPLAIN."

9. WINDING UP THE CONVERSATION, I REMINDED WEIZMAN THAT HUMAN RIGHTS WAS A SUBJECT OF GREAT SENSITIVITY BOTH FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE U.S. AND FOR THE ADMINISTRATION. THE COMING VISIT BY U.S. REP. TO THE U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER MEZVINSKY WAS ONLY ONE INDICATION OF THIS.

THE BEST WAY FMR ISRAEL TO INSURE THAT ITS REPUTATION WAS NOT UNFAIRLY TAINTED BECAUSE OF THESE ACCUSATIONS WAS TO TAKE EXTRA STEPS TO END ANY MISTREATMENT THAT WAS OCCURRING. IT HAD BEEN SHOWN THROUGH THE BEIT JALA AFFAIR THAT DENIALS BY HIS PEOPLE WERE NOT ALWAYS ACCURATE. WEIZMAN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD, IF HE FOUND "ANYONE MISBEHAVING," HE WOULD "CLAMP DOWN ON THEM". I NOTED I WAS PLEASED TO GET HIS COMMITMENT, AND CONTINUED SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 05 STATE 168941

THAT THERE WER TWO THINGS I THOUGHT HE PERSONALLY COULD NOW USEFULLY UNDERTAKE. HE COULD LOOK INTO INDIVIDUAL CASES. AND HE COULD USE HIS INFLUENCE TO MOVE THE GOI TO A DECISION TO ACCEPT EARLIER ICRC ACCESS TO ARAB PRISONERS. WEIZMAN SAID HE WOULD "SEE WHAT WE CAN DO."

10. AFTER THE MEETING, I FOLLOWED UP ON WEIZMAN'S EARLIER SUGGESTION TO TEHILA THAT WE MIGHT HAVE A COPY, IN ENGLISH, OF THE REPORT THEY HAD EARLIER REFERRED TO IN THE MEETING. TAHILA PROMISED TO GET IN TOUCH WITH GEN. ORLY, MILITARY GOVERNOR OF THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, AND GET US A TRANSLATION.

11. COMMENT: IT WAS A GOOD MEETING. WEIZMAN TREATED A SERIOUS ISSUE SERIOUSLY AND DID NOT SUCCUMB TO WHAT MAY HAVE BEEN A TEMPTATION TO DISMISS MY DEMARCHE IN AN EMOTIONAL OVERHANG FROM THE BOMB INCIDENT EARLIER IN THE DAY. I THINK HE WILL TRY TO BE HELPFUL, AND I HOPE THE STENOGRAPHIC RECORD, WHICH I READILY AGREED BE TAKEN, WILL BE WIDELY CIRCULATED IN THE GOI. NOW THAT MISTREATMENT HAS BEEN INTRODUCED AS A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN WEIZMAN AND ME, I WILL TAKE HIM AT HIS WORD AND GO BACK TO HIM IN A COUPLD OF WEEKS TO FIND WHAT HIS INVESTIGATION HAS UNCOVERED. WE CAN SEE THEN WHAT THE BEST NEXT STEP ON OUR PART WOULD BE. LEWIS. UNQUOTE VANCE

SECRET

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ARABS, PRISONERS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE168941
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:RENEUMANN
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780275-0412
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780797/aaaadebv.tel
Line Count: 195
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e2ba7c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS, STADIS
Reference: 78 STATE 145827, 78 STATE 155007
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2121646
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CONVERSATION WITH WEIZMAN ON MISTREATMENT OF ARAB PRISONERS
TAGS: SHUM, IS, XF
To: USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e2ba7c7b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014